

**Abstract 208**

**TITLE:** Focusing on Spanish-Speaking Parents in HIV/AIDS Prevention Education

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**ISSUE:** Major efforts in HIV prevention in the public schools have focused primarily on students. Parents as an effective reinforcement mechanism to classroom instruction has had minimal exploration. Also minimally explored is the concept of having HIV-informed parents act as trainers of other parents.

**SETTING:** Parent support groups (PTA, Title 1 Councils, etc.) at various school levels, NOT formal parent classes found in some adult schools.

**PROJECT:** A three-hour AIDS-101 workshop conducted in Spanish was developed for parents in small groups (less than 30) and included a pretest and a posttest. The workshop consisted of the following: (1) basic AIDS statistics, (2) a showing of the Red Cross video *Mi Hermano*, (3) a panel on Latinos HIV+, which was about living in families where AIDS is present, (4) a community-based organization giving basic AIDS-101 information, and (5) an opportunity for condom distribution. Four workshops have been conducted to date and another ten slated before the end of June 1999.

**RESULTS:** Evaluation findings indicated that a significant number of parents involved in the pilot project sessions had significant changes in attitudes about their own children being in classes with HIV children, in knowledge attained about HIV/AIDS, and in attitudes about condoms (over 250 condoms were taken, not given, by the Latinos attending, who were assumed to be primarily Catholic; comments heard indicated the condoms were overwhelming NOT for their children but for their own personal use; one parent "came out" and disclosed how someone in her own family had recently died of AIDS and yet NO ONE had yet talked of AIDS in her family).

**LESSONS LEARNED:** Latino parents can be educated about AIDS and condom use and become parent-peer educators. Latino parents prefer small groups to discuss sensitive issues related to the transmission of HIV. Latino parents have a real desire for such information a strong desire to talk to their own children about AIDS and a desire to talk about such matters with their own adult peers. Materials used must be quite visual in nature with easy reading levels when used in groups with low levels of formal education. The most effective approach was to incorporate a variety of teaching methods and to present at a fast pace.

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